



St. Maximilian Kolbe

St. Maximilian Kolbe was born, Raymond Kolbe, on January 8, 1894 in Zdunska Wola, in the Kingdom of Poland, which at the time was part of the Russian Empire.

After his father's death, he prayed to the Mother of God in his deep faith in God. He suddenly had a vision of Our Heavenly Mother in which she held out two crowns, one white and one red. She asked him if he was willing to accept one of the crowns she offered. The white one was meant for perseverance in purity, the red one that he would become a martyr. His response was a bold one of him wanting both. From this time until the end of his life, he would have devotion unparalleled, first for God and then the Blessed Mother.

At only 13 years of age he and his brother left home to enter the Franciscan seminary illegally crossing the border to Austria-Hungary. In 1910 he was admitted in and took his final vows in 1914 as a monk.

His life, work and devotion were to Our Heavenly Mother, to who he referred to as the Immaculata. He would do anything in order to fulfill any of her desires she requested of him including suffering. Within the monastery, he formed a society devoted to Mary, the Mother of Mercy itself, calling it Militia Immaculata. The mission was to fervently pass on the devotion to Mary and to fight against Her enemies and Holy Mother Church publishing pamphlets, books and a daily newspaper to spread the message.

In 1941, he was arrested for hiding Jewish people and sent to the concentration camp, Auschwitz. Here he endured much physical suffering. In July of the same year, it appeared several men had escaped and the commander ordered that 10 men be starved to death. One of the men chosen cried that he had a wife and children. Immediately, St. Maximilian spoke up and offered himself in the place of this man. He died a martyr, the highest form of an act of mercy, which is to give one's life for another.

We can see such a Polish connection, so to speak, starting with St. Faustina praying for the conversion of Poland; a martyr from Poland; and finally the spark from Poland that will usher in the new Springtime of Evangelization, St. Pope John Paul II.

The message of Jesus' mercy is a continuous thread throughout all of history through her saints. It is a worthwhile endeavor to study the saints and see the commonality of Jesus' message with all of them.

For the ongoing persecution of Christians worldwide:



POWERFUL PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL

Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our protection against the
wickedness and snares of the
devil. May God rebuke him, we
humbly pray; and do Thou,
O Prince of the Heavenly Host -
by the Divine Power of God -
cast into hell, satan and all the
evil spirits, who roam throughout
the world seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.